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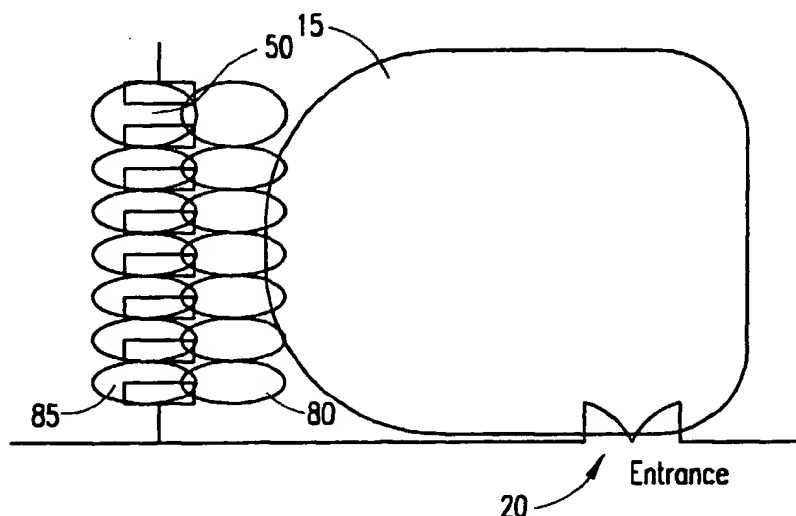
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(54) Title: TRANSACTION SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A system and method for obtaining payment for a ticket for a transportation system from a wireless mobile terminal (25) is disclosed. Upon entering of a wireless mobile terminal (25) into a first coverage area (15) of a transportation system at least one access unit (10) establishes a first wireless connection (30) with the wireless mobile terminal (25) in order to obtain connection data for the wireless mobile terminal (25). The connection data is forwarded to at least one second access unit (35, 70, 75) wherein responsive to the connection data and entry of the wireless mobile terminal (25) into a second coverage area, a second connection is established with the at least one second access unit (35, 70, 75). Payment may then be obtained from the wireless mobile terminal (25) via the second wireless connection.

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TRANSACTION SYSTEM**TECHNICAL FIELD**

5 The present invention relates to billing systems, and more particularly, to billing systems for use in public transportation facilities such as bus stations, train stations or subway stations.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 The use of mobile terminals (mobile telephones, portable computers, PDA's, pagers, etc.) as payment tools is becoming an increasingly developed area in the wireless communications art. Mobile terminals can be used to pay for purchases within a store or for the payment of services.
15 One area in which a mobile terminal would prove useful for the payment of services is in the public transportation area. A user could pay for a bus or train token at the bus or train station using their mobile terminal.

One problem with mobile terminal payment methodologies
20 is the time that it takes for a user's mobile terminal to connect with a wireless system. A certain period of time is required to establish a wireless connection. This could potentially require a user to stand in one location for a period of time which is unacceptable. In order for a system
25 of this type to prove effective, a user must be able to walk directly through the bus or train station without stopping for any period of time in order for their mobile terminal to connect with the wireless system. Therefore, a system is needed enabling a user to connect to a wireless unit within
30 a train, subway or bus station in substantially real time such that no delays are required.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

35 The present invention overcomes the foregoing and other problems with a system and method for obtaining payment for a ticket for a transportation system from a wireless mobile terminal. In a first embodiment, a wireless mobile terminal

establishes a first connection with a first access unit upon entry of the mobile terminal into a first coverage area of the transportation system. Connection data for the wireless mobile terminal is obtained by the first access unit and
5 forwarded to a second access unit. Responsive to the connection data and entry of the wireless mobile terminal into a second coverage area associated with the second access unit, a second wireless connection is established with the second access unit. Payment data is then obtained
10 from the wireless mobile terminal by the second access unit via the second wireless connection.

In an alternative embodiment, a first connection is established between a first access unit and the wireless mobile terminal upon entry of the wireless mobile terminal
15 into a first coverage area of the transportation system. The connection data is forwarded to a second access unit which responsive to the connection data and entry of the wireless mobile terminal into a second coverage area, establishes a second connection with the wireless mobile
20 terminal. The second access unit forwards the connection data to a third access unit associated with the second access unit which establishes a third wireless connection upon entry of the wireless mobile terminal into a third coverage area. The third access unit obtains payment data
25 from the wireless mobile terminal via the third wireless connection.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more complete understanding of the method and
30 apparatus of the present invention may be obtained by reference to the following Detailed Description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying Drawings wherein:

FIGURE 1 illustrates the ticket payment system of the present invention;

35 FIGURES 2 is a block diagram illustrating the interconnections of the entrance units and gate units of the present invention;

FIGURE 3 illustrates an alternative embodiment of the ticket payment system of the present invention;

FIGURE 4 is a block diagram illustrating the interconnection of the entrance units and the first and second stage gate units of the embodiment of FIGURE 3;

FIGURES 5a and 5b illustrate the manner in which the entrance units and gate units may handoff data therebetween;

FIGURE 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a data transfer between an entrance unit and a gate unit configuration as illustrated in FIGURE 5a;

FIGURE 7 is a flow diagram illustrating the transfer of data between an entrance unit and a gate unit configuration as illustrated in FIGURE 5b; and

FIGURE 8 is a flow diagram generally illustrating the operation of the system of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIGURES 1 and 2, there is illustrated a first embodiment of the ticket payment system of the present invention. While the present invention is described with respect to a ticket payment system, the invention may also be applied to other systems wherein data may be obtained from a mobile terminal via a short range wireless system such as Bluetooth (verification of ticket possession, verification of passport or other ID, etc.). The system comprises one or more entrance units 10 providing a coverage area 15 for monitoring the entrances 20 of a bus, train or subway (transportation) station. As the user passes through the coverage area 15 provided by the entrance units 10, a mobile terminal 25 carried by a user establishes a wireless communication link 30 with one of the entrance units 10. The mobile terminal 25 comprises a mobile telephone, portable computer, pager, PDA, etc. The coverage area 15 provided by the entrance units 10 is of large enough size such that sufficient time exists to establish a connection no matter at what speed the user may be traveling.

Once the wireless connection 30 has been established between the entrance unit 10 and the mobile terminal 25, connection data (i.e., frequency hop scheme, device address, clock-offset, etc.) may be transferred to the gate units 35 via a backbone network or dedicated wireless channel 40 between the entrance units 10 and the gate units 35. In a preferred embodiment, the entrance units 10 and gate units 35 of the present invention utilize the Bluetooth communications protocol in order to establish communications between the entrance unit 10, gate units 35 and mobile terminals 25. The communications between the entrance unit 10 and gate units 35 may also be via the Bluetooth protocol. By using the Bluetooth standard, multiple fixed entrance units 10 and gate units 35 may be interconnected via a central server as will be discussed more fully in moment. Each mobile terminal 25 can be connected to a single Bluetooth access unit and maintains that connection until the coverage area becomes too poor for communication.

The gate units 35 each have their own coverage area 45 located around a particular access gate 50 to the transportation system. Each of the gate units 35 searches for the mobile unit 25 using the Bluetooth Paging Procedure. Once one of the gate units 35 establishes a connection 55 with the mobile unit 25, the other gate units 35 cease paging for the mobile unit 25. Since an initial connection and synchronization with the mobile unit 25 need not be set up with the gate units 35 due to the connection information provided by the entrance units 10, a much shorter connection establishment period is required, and transaction data 61 for purchasing a ticket may be quickly retrieved from the mobile unit 25.

Referring now to FIGURES 3 and 4, there is illustrated an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the gates 50 are covered by a first stage of gate units 70 and a second stage of gate units 75. As before, the entrance units 10 provide a first coverage area 15 for establishing an initial connection with a mobile terminal 25

once a user passes through an entrance 20 of a transportation station. The entrance unit 10 establishes a wireless connection 30 with the mobile unit 25 as was previously described with respect to FIGURES 1 and 2. Once this connection 30 is established, the connection data (i.e., frequency hop scheme, device address, clock-offset) is forwarded to the first stage gate units 70 via the backbone network or wireless connection 100. In a preferred embodiment, the entrance units 10 and gate units 35 of the present invention utilize the Bluetooth communications protocol in order to establish communications between the entrance unit 10, gate units 35 and mobile terminals 25. The communications between the entrance unit 10 and gate units 35 may also be via the Bluetooth protocol. By using the Bluetooth standard, multiple fixed entrance units 10 and gate units 35 may be interconnected via a central server as will be discussed more fully in moment. Each mobile terminal 25 can be connected to a single Bluetooth access unit and maintain that connection until the coverage area becomes too poor for communication.

The first stage gate units 70 page for the mobile terminal 25 until one of the gate units 70 establishes a connection. Once one of the gate units 70, for example, gate unit 70a, establishes a wireless connection 90 with the mobile terminal 25, the mobile terminal 25 is removed from a wanted list, and the connection data is forwarded to the second stage gate 75a specifically associated with the first stage gate 70a that has detected the mobile unit 25. The first stage gate units 70 then cease paging for the mobile terminal 25. The second stage unit 75a establishes a wireless connection 95 with the mobile unit 25 using the provided connection data and obtains the transaction data 61 necessary to pay for a ticket or token on the bus, train or subway.

In yet a further embodiment of the system illustrated in FIGURES 3 and 4, each first stage gate unit 70 and second stage gate unit 75 may be co-located or closely located.

The first stage unit 70 may comprise a 100mW Bluetooth unit and the second stage unit 75 may comprise one or more 1mW units. The 100mW first stage unit 70 would search for new Bluetooth mobile terminal 25 and once a suitable terminal 25 was within range, the connection would be passed from the 100mW to the 1mW unit.

Referring now to FIGURES 5a and 5b, there are illustrated first and second embodiments of the manner in which the interface between the entrance units 10 and gate units 35, 70, 75 may be controlled. In the first embodiment of FIGURE 5a, the entrance units 10 and gate units 35, 70, 75 are interconnected with a central server 100 via the backbone network or wireless connection 40 discussed previously with respect to FIGURES 1-4. In this embodiment, the central server 100 controls the transmission of the connection data between the entrance units 10 and gate units 35, 70, 75. The information may be transmitted via a wireline bus or using a dedicated Bluetooth channel or other type of wireless communications channel. Central server 100 acts as an information hub and controls the transfer of information between the access units via signals transmitted over the backbone network or dedicated communications channel 40. The central server 100 may use implementations such as the Bluetooth Solution Provider Kit in order to provide communications between the access units.

The transmissions between the entrance units 10 and gate units (30, 70, 75) may, in one embodiment, be solved by solutions such as dedicated bluetooth server or other centralized techniques. In this configuration, the control server 100 acts as an information hub and controls the access units. A dedicated bluetooth server has a database and functionality to connect with several Bluetooth access units and external computer systems. In the flowchart illustrated in FIGURE 6, an entrance unit 10 sends at step 200 connection information to a control server 100, which may be a dedicated bluetooth server, of the detected mobile terminal 25. The control server 100 instructs at step 205

the gate units (30, 70, 75) to begin polling for the mobile terminal at step 205. The gate units begin polling at step 210 for the mobile terminal 25. A gate unit (30, 70, 75) detects at step 215 the mobile terminal 25 and reports this information back to control server 100. The control server 100 removes at step 220 the detected mobile terminal 25 from a "wanted list" of mobile terminals which are being polled for and instructs at step 225 the gate units (30, 70, 75) to cease polling for the mobile terminal 45.

In an alternative embodiment, the quality of connection between a mobile terminal 25 and a gate unit (30, 70, 75) may be utilized. When a gate unit (35, 70, 75) contacts a mobile terminal 25, the gate unit (35, 70, 75) performs a short sequence of test communications to gather information on signal strength or error rate. One manner in which handovers between entrance units 10 and gate units (35, 70, 75) may be controlled is by measuring the signal strength of radio signals between an access unit and a mobile terminal 25. When radio signal strengths reach certain levels, handovers may then occur. However, it is not always convenient to have signal strength information communicated between different units within a system. An alternative method utilizes a record of retransmission packets (erroneous packets) over a wireless communications link and basing handoff decisions on this information. The signal strength or erroneous packet information is forwarded to the control server 100 and the connection between the connected gate units (35, 70, 75) and the mobile terminal 25 is shut down. When a number of gate units (35, 70, 75) report the information on signal strength or error rate to the control server 100 in a short time period, the control server 100 decides which gate unit (35, 70, 75) should serve the mobile terminal 25 and transmits the order to the determined gate unit (35, 70, 75).

In the embodiment described in FIGURE 5b, the entrance units 10 and gate units 35, 70, 75 further include control logic 105 enabling them to autonomously negotiate with each

other about which access unit shall control a specific mobile unit 25. Referring now also to FIGURE 7, there is illustrated the process wherein information is transmitted between the entrance unit 10 and gate units 35, 70, 75 when control logic 105 is implemented within each access unit as shown in FIGURE 5b. When the entrance unit 10 is ready to hand over a mobile terminal 25, entrance unit 10 sends at step 230 connection data to the gate units (35, 70, 75). When a gate unit (30, 70, 75) detects the mobile terminal 25, this information is reported back to the entrance unit 10 at step 235. The entrance unit 10 removes the mobile terminal 25 from a "wanted list" of mobile terminals and instructs the gate unit (35, 70, 75) at step 240 to connect with the mobile terminal 25. The entrance unit 10 also instructs the remainder of the gate units (35, 70, 75) to cease searching for the mobile terminal at step 245. Alternatively, the quality of connection procedure described previously with respect to FIGURE 6 may also be used in transferring information between the entrance unit 10 and gates (35, 70, 75). In this process, the entrance unit 10 would act as the control server 10 during the process.

Situations may occur where a mobile terminal 25 is dropped from its connection due to various events, for example, the user of the mobile terminal may travel to a gate unit other than the expected gate unit, the mobile terminal may lose coverage, the user may leave the transportation station, etc. The default behavior in these scenarios would be for the gate units (35, 70, 75) to report the loss of the mobile terminal 25 to the control server 100 or access unit containing control logic 105. The entrance unit 10 would be able to reconnect with the mobile terminal 25 again when it enters its coverage area.

Referring now to Figure 8, there is illustrated a flow diagram describing the operation of the system of the present invention. Initially, a connection is established between the mobile terminal and the entrance unit at step 120. Connection data is obtained at step 122 from the

mobile terminal by the entrance unit. The entrance units transfer at step 125 the connection data to the gate units. The gate units begin searching at step 130 for the mobile terminal. Once the mobile terminal is located, a connection
5 is established at step 145 with the mobile terminal, and the search may be ceased by the other gate units at step 150. The transaction data is provided to the gate unit which has detected the mobile unit at step 155, or alternatively, as described in the alternative embodiment of the invention,
10 the connection data can be forwarded to an associated gate unit for completion of the transaction.

The previous description is of a preferred embodiment for implementing the invention, and the scope of the invention should not necessarily be limited by this
15 description. The scope of the present invention is instead defined by the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for obtaining data from a wireless mobile terminal, comprising:

5 at least one first access unit for establishing a first wireless connection with the wireless mobile terminal and obtaining connection data for the wireless mobile terminal when the wireless mobile terminal enters a first coverage area;

10 at least one second access unit for establishing a second wireless connection with the wireless mobile terminal responsive to connection data provided from the at least one first access unit and entry of the wireless mobile terminal into a second coverage area;

15 wherein upon establishment of the second wireless connection the data is obtained from the wireless mobile terminal via the second wireless connection.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein the at least one first access unit is associated with an entrance of a
20 transportation system.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the at least one second access unit is associated with at least one gate of a transportation system.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein the at least one
25 first and second access units comprise Bluetooth wireless units using the Bluetooth communications protocol.

5. The system of Claim 1, further including a control server for controlling a transfer of connection data between the at least one first access units and the at least one
30 second access units.

6. The system of Claim 1, further including control logic within the at least one first and second access units for controlling transfer of connection data between the at least one first access unit and the at least one second
5 access unit.

7. The system of Claim 1, further including at least one third access unit associated with each of the at least one second access units for providing a third wireless connection within a third coverage area responsive to the
10 connection data from the at least one first access unit, the third access unit further forwarding the connection data to an associated second access unit after establishment of the third wireless connection.

8. The system of Claim 1, wherein the data comprises
15 payment data for a ticket to a transportation system.

9. The system of Claim 1, wherein the data comprises verification data of possession of a ticket to a transportation system.

10. The system of Claim 1, wherein the data comprises
20 identification data of a user of the mobile terminal.

11. A system for obtaining payment for a ticket for a transportation system from a wireless mobile terminal, comprising:

a first plurality of wireless units using a
25 Bluetooth communications protocol for establishing a first wireless connection using at least one of the plurality of wireless units with the wireless mobile terminal when the wireless mobile terminal enters a first coverage area of the transportation system, the at least one of the plurality of
30 wireless units obtaining connection data from the wireless mobile terminal;

a second plurality of wireless units using the Bluetooth communications protocol for establishing a second wireless connection with the wireless mobile terminal in a second coverage area of the transportation system using at least one of the plurality of second wireless units responsive to the connection data from the first wireless unit;

wherein upon establishment of the second wireless connection, payment data is obtained from the wireless mobile terminal from the at least one of the plurality of second wireless units.

12. The system of Claim 11, wherein the second plurality of wireless units page for the wireless mobile terminal responsive to receipt of the connection data.

13. The system of Claim 11, wherein the second plurality of wireless units cease paging for the wireless mobile terminal upon establishment of the second wireless connection.

14. The system of Claim 11 wherein the first plurality of access units are associated with an entrance of the transportation system.

15. The system of Claim 11 wherein the second plurality of access units are associated with a plurality of gates of the transportation system.

16. The system of Claim 11 further including a control server for controlling a transfer of connection data between at least one first access unit and at least one second access unit.

17. The system of Claim 11 further including control logic within the first and second plurality of access units

for controlling transfer of connection data between at least one first access unit and at least one second access unit.

18. A system for obtaining payment of a ticket for a transportation system from a wireless mobile terminal,
5 comprising:

a first plurality of wireless units using the Bluetooth communications protocol for establishing a first wireless connection with the wireless mobile terminal when the wireless mobile terminal enters a first coverage area of
10 the transportation system using at least one of the plurality of wireless units, at least one of the plurality of wireless units obtaining connection data from the wireless mobile terminal;

a second plurality of wireless units using the Bluetooth communications protocol for establishing a second
15 wireless connection with the wireless mobile terminal responsive to the connection data and entry of the wireless mobile terminal into a second coverage area of the transportation system;

a third plurality of wireless units using the Bluetooth communications protocol each associated with one of the second plurality of wireless units, each of the third
20 plurality of wireless units for establishing a third wireless connection with the wireless mobile terminal responsive to connection data from the at least one wireless
25 unit of the second plurality of wireless units and entry of the wireless mobile terminal into a third coverage area;

wherein upon establishment of the third wireless connection, payment data is obtained from the wireless
30 mobile terminal from at least one of the plurality of third wireless terminals.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the plurality of first wireless units are associated with an entrance of the transportation system.

20. The system of Claim 18, wherein the plurality of second and third wireless units are associated with at least one gate of the transportation system.

5

21. The system of Claim 18, further including a control server for controlling a transfer of connection data between the at least one first access units, the at least one second access units, and the at least one third access units.

10

22. The system of Claim 18, further including control logic within the at least one first, second and third access units for controlling transfer of connection data between the at least one first access unit, the at least one second access unit, and the at least one third access unit.

15

23. A method for obtaining payment of a ticket on a transportation system from a wireless mobile terminal, comprising:

20

establishing a first connection between a first communication unit and the mobile terminal upon entry of the mobile terminal into a first coverage area;

retrieving connection data from the mobile terminal;

25

forwarding the connection data to a second communication unit;

establishing a second connection between the second communications unit and the mobile terminal responsive to the connection data and entry of the mobile terminal into a second coverage area;

30

purchasing the ticket via the second connection.

24. The method of Claim 23, wherein the first and second communications units use a Bluetooth communications protocol.

35

25. The method of Claim 23, wherein the step of establishing a second connection further comprises paging for the mobile terminal using the connection data.

26. A method for obtaining payment of a ticket on a transportation system from a wireless mobile terminal, comprising:

establishing a first connection between a first communication unit and the mobile terminal upon entry of the mobile terminal into a first coverage area;

retrieving connection data from the mobile terminal;

forwarding the connection data to a second communication unit;

establishing a second connection between the second communications unit and the mobile terminal responsive to the connection data and entry of the mobile terminal into a second coverage area;

forwarding the connection data to a third communication unit associated with the second communication unit;

establishing a third connection between the third communicating unit and the mobile terminal responsive to the connection data and entry of the mobile terminal into a third coverage area; and

purchasing the ticket via the third connection.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein the step of establishing a second connection further comprises paging for the mobile terminal using the connection data.

28. The method of Claim 26, wherein the first and second communications units use a Bluetooth communications protocol.

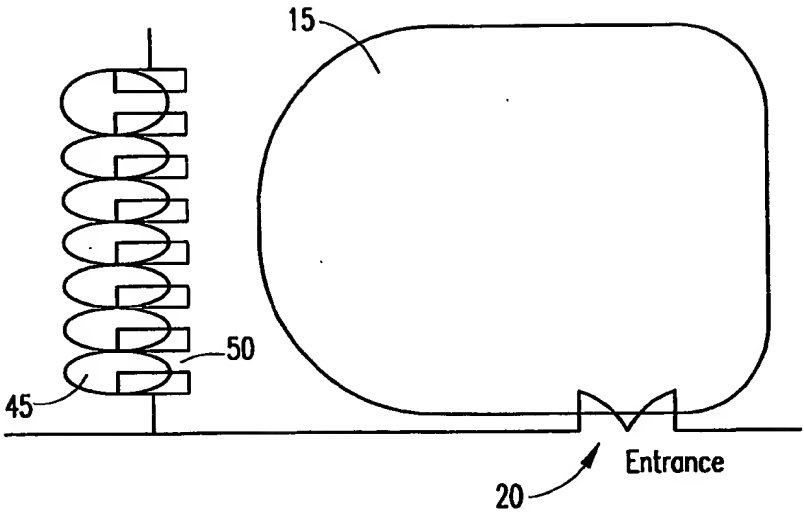


FIG. 1

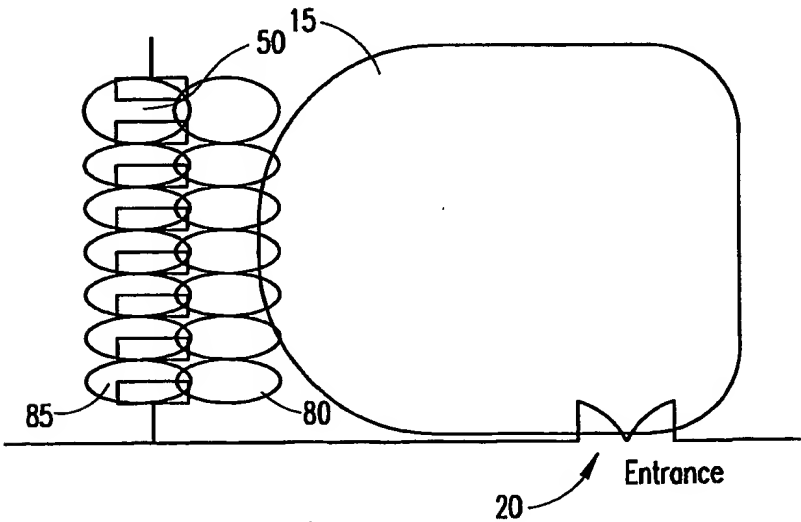
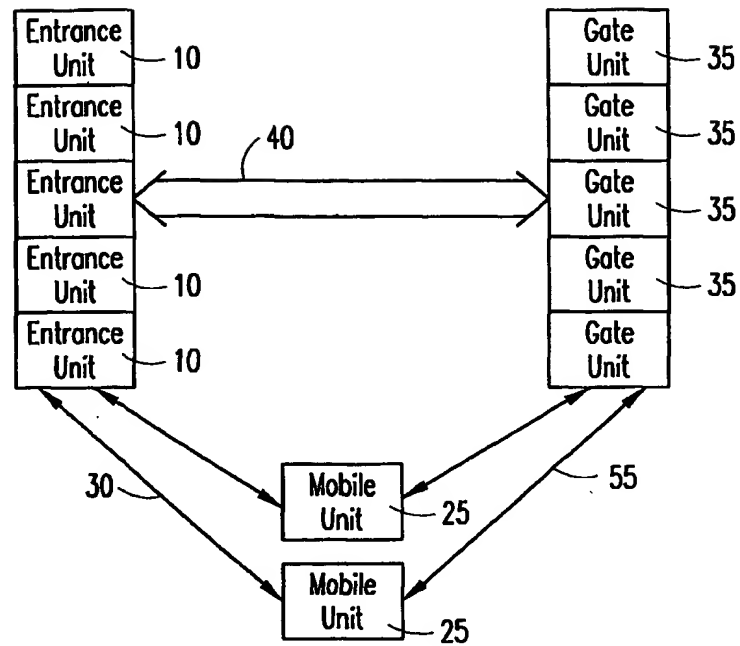
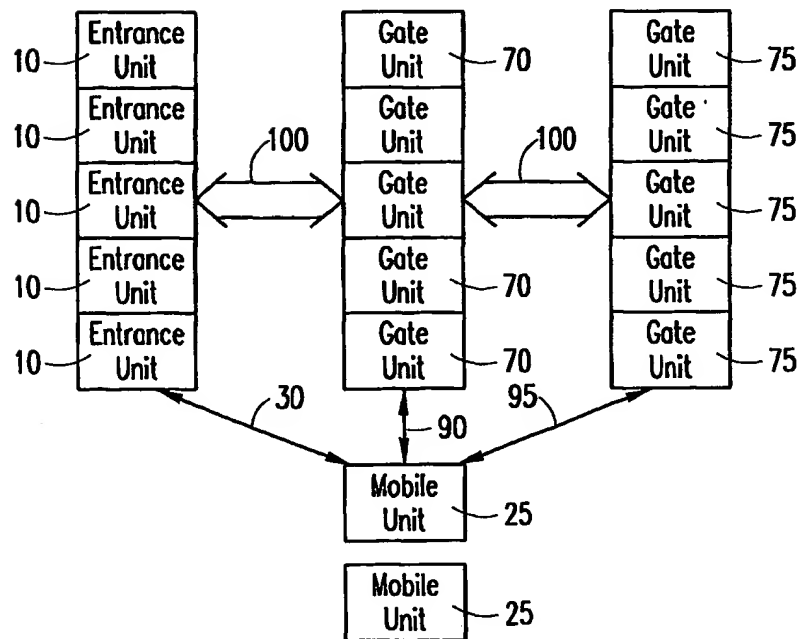
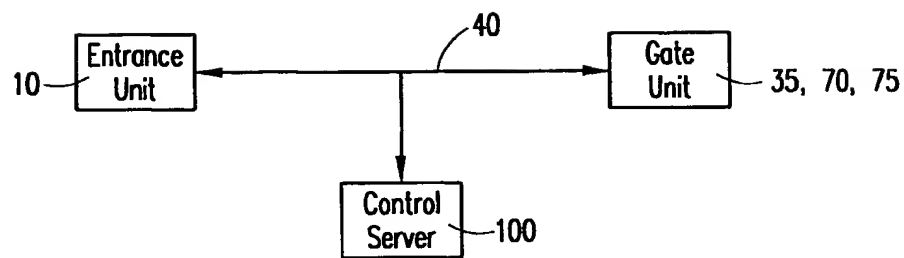
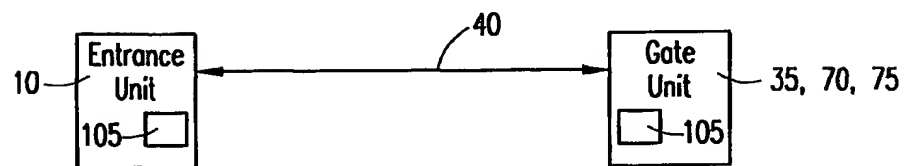


FIG. 3

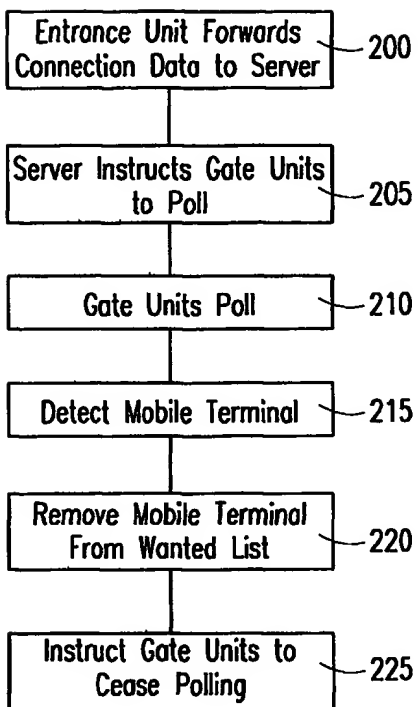
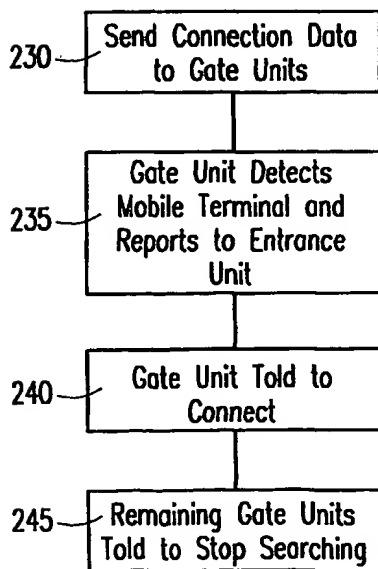
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**FIG. 2****FIG. 4**

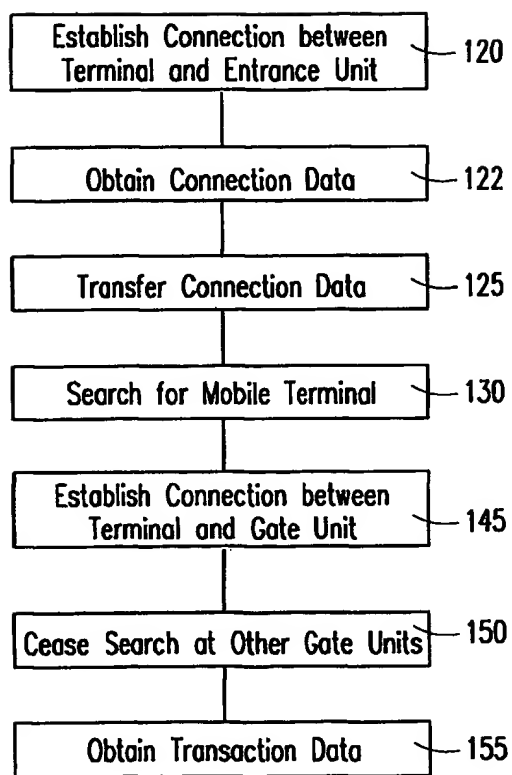
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*FIG. 5A**FIG. 5B*

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**FIG. 6****FIG. 7**

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**FIG. 8**

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